

**Town of Arlington
Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC)**

Tuesday, March 22, 2005 7:15 PM

Committee members present: Elisabeth Carr-Jones, Ralph Elwell, Jeff Maxtutis, Lt. Jim McHugh, Mike Rademacher, John Sanchez, Scott Smith, Ed Starr

Visitors: Terry Dash, Don Cook (VHB), Laura Castelli (VHB), Trish Domigan (VHB)

1. The minutes of 2/22/2005 were approved unanimously

2. Downing Square update

Because of the need for a level center section in the raised crosswalk, the quote from Recycled Technology may be higher than was originally anticipated. We will obtain an updated quote.

3. Symmes Subcommittee Report

Between 7:25 and 8:30 PM, we discussed and voted on the following items. The numbering follows the numbering used in the Symmes Transportation Subcommittee (STS) spreadsheet for voting in early March 2005. Scott Smith noted that these were recommendations on what should be done with the transportation system, and that TAC was not taking a position on who should pay for them.

3.1 Summer Street Corridor

Discussion

Given potential queue lengths on Summer, a right-turn pocket from Summer westbound to Hospital may be necessary to reduce blockage of Grove Street. However, such a pocket would add to the expanse of asphalt on Summer Street. The proposal is to first, do nothing in the construction that would make future installation of a pocket difficult, and second, to reevaluate the need for a pocket following completion of the project.

A similar phased treatment is envisioned for the Summer/Grove and Summer/Oak Hill intersections. Phase 1 would include traffic calming, while Phase 2 would add a signal at Summer and Grove. Phase 1 includes pedestrian refuge islands on Summer Street at the west side of Grove Street and the east side of Oak Hill Drive. There would also be crosswalks at these locations (mildly raised to improve visibility), as well as crosswalks parallel to Summer Street at Grove Street and Oak Hill Drive. Phase 1 also includes a two-way left turn lane on Summer Street between Grove Street and Oak Hill Drive. Finally, it includes installation of conduit between Summer/Brattle/Hospital and Summer/Grove, to facilitate the signal under phase 2.

Voted Recommendations

The following recommendations were voted unanimously.

2-1) Redesign Summer/Brattle/Hospital intersection to include signal at Hospital Road.

2-2) Optimize signal timings at the Summer/Mill/Cutter Hill intersection. TAC to specify the goals for the optimization.

2-3) Prepare for the future installation of a right-turn pocket for westbound traffic turning right from Summer Street to Hospital Road.

2-7) Adopt a phased treatment of the Summer/Grove and Summer/Oak Hill intersections
Phase 1) Traffic calming measures to include refuge islands and crosswalks at Grove and Oak Hill

Phase 2) If needed, signal at Grove coordinated with the signal at Summer/Hospital/Brattle

3.2 Woodside Lane Access

Discussion

Scott Smith presented the options:

A) Close the access between Hospital Road and Woodside Lane (except to emergency vehicles, pedestrians and bicycles)

- Would eliminate site traffic on Woodside Lane
- More congestion at Summer/Hospital/Brattle
- Would force Woodside Lane residents to use circuitous routes involving private ways to access Summer Street at a signal.
- Unclear how unimpeded emergency vehicle access could be maintained
- Was unanimously rejected by the STS

B) Permit two-way access as exists now

- Would put approximately 700 vehicles / day from the site onto Woodside Lane (TAC estimate). This is higher than the background traffic on Woodside Lane, and is somewhat higher than the estimated daily 500+ site vehicles using Woodside Lane when the hospital was in full operation.
- Unimpeded emergency vehicle access
- Maximizes mobility for site residents and visitors
- May be inconsistent with the Symmes Advisory Committee's requirement for Woodside Lane.
- Was rejected 3-1 by the STS

C) Permit one-way access into the site

- Would put approximately 350 vehicles / day from the site onto Woodside Lane (TAC estimate). This is comparable to the background traffic on Woodside Lane, and is somewhat lower than the estimated daily 500+ site vehicles using Woodside Lane when the hospital was in full operation.
- Easier for emergency vehicle access than full closure
- Enables Woodside Lane residents direct access to a signal-protected left turn at Summer
- Was approved 3-1 by the STS

In TAC's discussion, other issues noted included the following.

- Should Hospital Road be a public or private way? Having a public way gives police the power to enforce the one-way restriction, but requires that the Town maintain it.

- How wide does the access need to be? Eighteen feet are required for extenders on a ladder truck, but Lt. McHugh noted that a ladder truck would have no reason to stop on this access (no adjacent buildings). Therefore, in order to improve compliance with the one-way restriction, we agreed that a narrower roadway would be appropriate.

Voted Recommendations

The following recommendation was voted 7 in the affirmative, 1 in the negative:

- 3-1) Permit one-way access into the Symmes site from Woodside Lane.

3.3 Off-Site Roadway Mitigation, Discussion and Voted Recommendations

Jeff Maxtutis introduced the following recommendations, which were unanimously approved:

- 2-8) Narrow the entrance to Oak Hill Drive from Summer Street.
- 4-1) Install curb extensions at Oak Hill Drive and Woodside Lane.
- 4-2) Install traffic calming device(s) on Oak Hill Drive north of Woodside Lane contingent upon abutter consensus.
- 4-4) Install stop sign on Woodside Lane at Oak Hill Drive.
- 3-5) Install curb extensions at Woodside Lane, Vista Circle, Hazel Terrace, contingent upon abutter approval.

3.4 Pedestrian and Bicycle Improvements, Discussion and Voted Recommendations

Elisabeth Carr-Jones introduced the following recommendations, which were unanimously approved:

- 5-1) Install sidewalk on entire length of Hospital Road.
- 5-2) Install sidewalk on the north side of Summer Street from Hospital Road to Oak Hill Drive.
- 5-3) At the Summer/Brattle/Hemlock intersection, add a crosswalk to the Mass Highway plan from the northwest corner of Hemlock to the southeast corner of Brattle.
- 5-4) Add a crosswalk on Hospital Road at the approach to Summer Street

4. Massachusetts Avenue Corridor

Patricia Domigan and Don Cook of VHB presented a concept for the Mass. Ave. corridor between Mill Street and the Cambridge line. The concept includes two wide travel lanes plus bike lanes for most of East Arlington. We briefly discussed whether a median would be appropriate:

- Given the number of driveways and intersections, a raised median would have many breaks
 - A flush median may not be effective at improving pedestrian safety
- However, a median should not be dismissed out of hand.

They will be meeting with Mass Highway on 3/31 (concerning improvements in Arlington Center). We agreed it would be appropriate to broach this project at that time. Also, at a recent Selectmen's meeting, the possibility of \$2 million in Federal/State funding was raised.

Other issues include

- community consensus on the two-lane approach.
- possible conflict with the Arlington Center landscaping project
- staging the project

3a. Symmes (continued)

3.4 Pedestrian and Bicycle Improvements (continued)

Discussion

The discussion of Symmes resumed at 9:15 PM, continuing until 10:10 PM, with the following further points being made on pedestrian and bicycle improvements:

- We agreed to defer consideration of an informal pedestrian pathway on the paper Millett Street until the Town's rights are known.
- We agreed that although a pedestrian trail from the top of Hospital Road to the Summer/Grove intersection was desirable, it was not in scope as a transportation improvement. Therefore, it would not be part of our recommendations.
- We discussed additional access to the Bikeway, after several committee members received an e-mail from Ron Santosuosso expressing concern that construction of stairs at Grove Street would be difficult, and suggesting improved access from Brattle Place as an alternative. Since Brattle Place is a private way, this would require further discussion and support from the property owners.
- We discussed the installation of a crosswalk across Summer Street east of Hospital Road. Although this would provide better service to the bus stop than the current arrangement, it presents a number of challenges:
 - A) The current plan for this intersection is to run a pedestrian phase concurrent with the left turn from Hospital Road to Summer Street. This new crosswalk would require its own pedestrian phase. If the pedestrian phase is called frequently, it would cause a significant increase in the traffic delay on Hospital Road.
 - B) We discussed running the pedestrian phase concurrent with the through movement on Brattle and Hemlock. Cars turning on to Summer eastbound would wait at the crosswalk until the pedestrian phase was complete. However, there is likely not enough room in the intersection to store these vehicles.

Given these challenges, the committee agreed not to recommend the installation of this crosswalk.

Voted Recommendations

The following recommendations were unanimously approved:

5-5) Add a sidewalk on the Hospital side of Woodside Lane between Hospital Road and Oak Hill Drive, contingent on abutter consensus.

5-10) Explore improving access to the bikeway via Brattle Place.

5-11) Install a curb cut on the south side of Summer Street behind the High School to access the Bikeway.

5-13) Install and/or improve sidewalks on upper Hemlock Street between Yerxa and Epping for Stratton Elementary School access.

3.5 Public Transportation, *Discussion and Voted Recommendations*

Scott Smith introduced the following recommendations, which were unanimously approved:

6-1) Encourage a shuttle bus operating from site to Alewife station and town.

6-2) Encourage working with the MBTA to increase Route 67 service to site and area.

6-3) Provide bus stops with rain cover at site and medical office building.

6-4) Encourage tenants of medical office building to employ transportation demand management.

6-5) Encourage unbundling the cost of parking in all leases and purchases.

5. Dallin School

Jeff Maxtutis and Elisabeth Carr-Jones reported that they met with the Dallin School principal, Heather Thomas and several neighbors regarding transportation issues with the school rebuilding. Next steps will be to build consensus with the Parent Teacher Organization and the Permanent Town Building Committee.

6. Interviews for new TAC member

Ralph Elwell reported that interviews are planned in April for 6 residents who have expressed an interest in joining TAC.

The meeting adjourned at 10:15 PM

Handouts:

Agenda package including agenda, action list, minutes from 2/22 and project list - from Ed Starr

Symmes handout including draft report to ARB, recommendations for voting, STS votes, Summer Street traffic analysis, and Summer Street/Grove/Oak Hill traffic calming concept - from Ed Starr

Mass. Ave. corridor diagrams - from VHB

Dallin School Safety and Access priorities - from Jeff Maxtutis